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MONTANA CHRISTMAS TREE SHIPMENTS DROP SLIGHTLY

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Three million Christmas trees were shipped from Montana to other states during the 1950 season. While this made the sixth year that more than 3 million trees were produced in the state, shipments were down 7.3 percent from 1949. (Table 1.)

Although Montana production tapered off rather generally, the 14.5-percent drop in Lincoln County shipments accounted for seven tenths of the net decline. Both Flathead and Lake Counties continued their increases begun in 1948. Shipments from Sanders County were one third below 1949, while cutting in Powell County was larger than usual.

Table 1. Comparison of number of Christmas trees shipped - 1949-1950 - Montana

County	1949	1950	Percent of change 1949 to 1950
	--Number of trees--		
Flathead	1,253,761	1,283,250	+ 2.3
Lincoln	1,201,064	1,027,050	- 14.5
Missoula	275,630	223,500	- 18.9
Lake	200,812	205,480	+ 2.3
Granite	93,509	92,800	- 0.8
Sanders	88,928	58,700	- 34.0
Ravalli	88,052	81,400	- 7.5
Mineral	31,500	11,700	- 62.9
Powell	4,000	14,000	+250.0
Other 1/	19,700	19,900	+ 1.0
Total	3,256,956	3,017,780	- 7.3

1/ Includes Beaverhead, Cascade, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lewis & Clark, Silver Bow, and Wheatland Counties.

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Thirty states received Montana trees in 1950. As in previous years, the Central States took the majority of the trees shipped. Among the leading states, only Illinois and Oklahoma took more trees this year than in the previous season. Shipments to California markets dropped off over 50 percent.

Table 2. Leading ten state markets for Montana Christmas trees

1949		1950	
State	Trees	State	Trees
Illinois	612,750	Illinois	617,500
Iowa	437,000	Iowa	375,250
Texas	308,750	Texas	289,750
Kansas	242,250	Missouri	244,250
Missouri	209,250	Kansas	242,250
Nebraska	199,500	Oklahoma	204,250
Oklahoma	190,000	Nebraska	194,750
Minnesota	133,000	Minnesota	109,250
California	125,750	Indiana	76,000
South Dakota	93,000	North Dakota	73,750

The state and national forest Christmas tree harvest was down somewhat from the 1949 record. Three fourths of the trees cut in 1950 came from farms, ranches, and company-owned lands.

Table 3. Cut of Christmas trees by land ownership groups

Ownership group	Number of trees cut				Change	
	1949		1950		1949-1950	
	Thousand	Percent	Thousand	Percent	Thousand	Percent
Private	2,275	69.8	2,241	74.2	- 34	- 1.5
Federal	689	21.2	597	19.8	- 92	-13.3
State	293	9.0	180	6.0	-113	-38.6
All	3,257	100.0	3,018	100.0	-239	- 7.3

The 597,000 Christmas trees cut from national forests in Montana was 13 percent below the peak achieved in 1949. (Table 4.) By cutting 415,472 trees in 1950 the Kootenai National Forest approached its top harvest of 439,000 trees in 1946. The Flathead, Lolo, Bitterroot, and Deerlodge National Forests furnished considerably fewer trees in 1950 than in 1949.

Table 4. Number of Christmas trees cut on national forests

Montana

National forest	1949	1950	Change from 1949	
	Number of trees		Number	Percent
Beaverhead	1,432	751	- 681	- 47.5
Bitterroot	45,439	28,639	-16,800	- 37.0
Cabinet	905	8,444	+ 7,539	+833.0
Deerlodge	33,831	17,352	-16,479	- 48.7
Flathead	194,887	109,216	-85,671	- 44.0
Gallatin	930	800	- 130	- 14.0
Kootenai	373,734	415,472	+41,738	+ 11.2
Lewis & Clark	--	200	+ 200	--
Lolo	38,155	16,208	-21,947	- 57.5
Total	689,313	597,082	-92,231	- 13.4

Twenty-six percent fewer trees were shipped by truck in 1950 as compared with 1949. About half of the total decline in shipments from the previous season was accounted for in the lower volume hauled to market by truck.

Table 5. Christmas tree shipments by railroad and truck - 1950

County	Rail shipments[1/]	Truck shipments	Total shipments
	Number of trees		
Flathead	1,154,250	129,000	1,283,250
Lincoln	964,250	62,800	1,027,050
Missoula	209,000	14,500	223,500
Lake	185,250	20,230	205,480
Granite	76,000	16,800	92,800
Ravalli	47,500	33,900	81,400
Sanders	47,500	11,200	58,700
Powell	--	14,000	14,000
Mineral	9,500	2,200	11,700
Lewis & Clark	--	7,500	7,500
Silver Bow	--	5,250	5,250
Other	--	7,150	7,150
Total	2,693,250	324,530	3,017,780
Percent of total			
1950	89.3	10.7	100.0
1949	86.5	13.5	100.0

1/ Data from reports by three railroads: Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific.